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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 004396

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [UNSC](#) [IR](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER COUNSELS IRANIANS TO
COOPERATE

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4(b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Japan has made it clear that it will stand with the international community on the issue of Iranian nuclear proliferation even if it means risking commercial repercussions. In an August 2 meeting with Iranian Vice President Esfandior Rahim Mashay, Foreign Minister Aso counseled that Iran needs to reestablish its credibility with the international community and would be well-advised to fully comply with the provisions of UNSCR 1696. Aso told Mashay that while Japan recognizes Iran's right to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes, the fact that the IAEA has lost faith in Iran's credibility is something that needs to be remedied. A planned meeting next week in Tokyo at the Deputy Foreign Ministerial level has been canceled by Tehran, citing "rising tensions in the Middle East." END SUMMARY.

JAPAN REITERATES SUPPORT FOR UNSCR 1696

12. (U) Following the adoption of UNSCR 1696, MOFA immediately issued a statement fully supporting the resolution and calling on Iran to accept the comprehensive proposals presented by the EU-3, to fulfill the requirements of the resolution, and to return to the negotiation process. In addition, in statements to the press, both Foreign Minister Aso and Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe reiterated that Japan will stand with the international community on the issue of Iranian nuclear proliferation even if to do so risks negative ramifications to Japan's energy and economic interests. "The nuclear issue has priority," said Foreign Minister Aso.

FOREIGN MINISTER ADVISES IRAN TO COOPERATE

13. (C) During an August 3 meeting with Embassy Tokyo Political Officer, Takashi Kamada, Chief of the Iran Unit in MOFA's Second Middle East Division, provided a read-out of Foreign Minister Aso's August 2 meeting with visiting Iranian Vice President Mashay. Kamada began by pointing out that Mashay is only one of a number of Iranian Vice Presidents and that he is responsible for cultural and tourism affairs, not nuclear or political issues. He was not in Tokyo at the invitation of MOFA; rather, he was here to inaugurate a museum exhibition of Persian art. Despite the fact that Aso had met the previous week with Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki in Kuala Lumpur, the Japanese agreed to Mashay's request for an Aso courtesy call, believing that such a meeting would provide another opportunity for Tokyo to urge the Iranians to cooperate more fully with the international community.

14. (C) Mashay began by recalling how during the Iran-Iraq war the West had supported Saddam Hussein. Then following the war, the international community led by the West tried to limit Iran's progress as its people worked to reconstruct the country. He maintained that Iran has the right to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes and that this belief is widely shared by all Iranians. Aso replied that Japan understands that Iran has the right to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes. However, the problem is that the IAEA has lost confidence in Iran and is unable to trust Tehran's entreaties that its nuclear program is intended only for peaceful purposes. Iran must remedy this lack of confidence and cannot hope to solve the problem if it continues to view itself only as a victim. Iran must change its views.

15. (C) Iran, Mashay retorted, is stressing two principles in regard to this dispute. First, every country has the right to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Second, Iran has always been opposed to the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Iran has accepted the presence of IAEA inspectors on its territory and has provided them with information. It is now time for the West to engage in confidence building measures with Iran. With regard to the P5 plus One proposal, it is very complex and Iran is studying it carefully. It is not fair for the West to insist on an answer before Iran can fully study all of its ramifications. Aso replied that he believes EU High Representative Javier Solana's position on this dispute is very close to Iran's, but even he complains that Iran's attitude toward the proposal is unreasonable. Aso speculated that perhaps there is a failure in communications and asked Mashay if the Iranians have been providing updates about their deliberations to Solana or others in order to assure the international community that they are seriously considering it. Mashay said there had been no such exchanges.

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16. (C) Aso concluded the meeting by reminding Mashay that 60 years ago Japan had been defeated following a major war and therefore knows very well what it's like to be isolated from the rest of the international community. Iran would be well-advised to make a better effort to build confidence and trust with the rest of the world, he stated.

IRANIANS CANCEL MEETING

17. (C) Kamada told us that he had been working to prepare for a Japan-Iran Deputy Foreign Ministerial-level meeting the following week in Tokyo, but that Tehran had advised MOFA early on August 3 that the Iranians would not be able to attend due to "rising tensions in the Middle East."

18. (C) COMMENT: Kamada thought the cancellation had nothing to do with the outcome of the Aso - Mashay meeting. In our view, however, in light of Aso's meetings with Mashay and with FM Mottaki, and of Japan's firm public support of UNSCR 1696, Iran's leaders may believe there is no point in discussing this matter further with the Japanese.

SCHIEFFER